



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913

PH (517) 373.1801 | FAX (517) 373.5801

www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/hardiman/

For Immediate Release
July 26, 2006

Contact: Alan Bolter
517-373-1801

Sen. Hardiman makes child safety top priority in state budget

LANSING — Sen. Bill Hardiman, R-Kentwood, said that the Department of Human Services budget for the 2006-2007 fiscal year approved by the Legislature today will add dozens of new workers to strengthen the state's protection of children.

Hardiman led the Senate-side of the budget negotiations that resulted in 51 new child abuse and neglect investigators and five new workers who review the licensing of child daycare and adult foster-care homes.

"Recent tragic events have reminded us of the importance of child-safety programs that investigate abuse allegations," Hardiman said. "These new workers improve Michigan's ability to investigate the abuse and neglect complaints of our state's most vulnerable residents. People who place their loved ones in daycare centers or adult-care homes expect no less."

Other significant changes in the budget include funding the new Jobs, Education and Training program to assist residents of Kent County and three other pilot counties to move from welfare to work. Programs in education and job skills will enable more welfare recipients to retain jobs and move off public assistance. Support programs for welfare-to-work clients are being increased with a special emphasis on day-care funding.

The human services budget also includes increased funding for programs to strengthen marriages and fatherhood among the public assistance population. The programs have been urged by Hardiman as part of a long-term welfare strategy.

"Marriage and fatherhood programs are a strategic investment in getting at root causes of so many issues for families on assistance," Hardiman said. "We need to fund programs to strengthen families because we can never afford the financial and social cost of responding to the broad effects of weakened families."

Specific programs for Kent County include \$126,500 for Camp O'Malley; \$25,000 for a new program to aid seniors in qualifying for food assistance; \$200,000 for the Effective Family Formation program; \$40,000 to expand the model of welfare to work started by Fred Keller and Cascade Engineering; and other programs such as Earned Income Tax Credit education, which Kent County organizations, charities and faith based groups have participated in.

"In another tough budget year, the Legislature has balanced many good programs and goals with available revenue," Hardiman said. "While we could not fund all things that might help the needy, we have made good choices to get the most of these funds and help the most people."

The DHS budget now heads to the governor for her consideration.

###